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Bruce Goldsen  
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To: Michigan Senate Committee on Judiciary  
From: Michigan Association of Broadcasters  
Re: **Support Senate Bill 848**  
Date: March 22, 2016

Dear Chairman Jones and Honorable Committee members,

The Michigan Association of Broadcasters (MAB), representing 352 Television and Radio stations in the state of Michigan, supports Senate Bill 848 – *The Student Free Press and Civics Readiness Act*. Senate Bill 848 is an important piece of legislation that recognizes the value of student journalism at Michigan's public schools, colleges, and universities.

Robust journalism programs help students become college and career ready through the practical application of writing, development of strong research habits and work-ethic skills using real-world technology, and encouragement of civic engagement. Journalism students learn how to sort through and evaluate the credibility of information they receive from social media, news organizations, and personal interviews to get at the truth and report it accurately. Senate Bill 848 supports responsible student-directed journalism, where students learn by applying the best concepts of decision-making, critical thinking, and establishing authentic and thoughtful voices.

Numerous national studies confirm that students who engage in journalism through high school newspaper, TV or radio stations get better grades, earn higher scores on the ACT, and perform better academically in their first year of college. However, the students lose these benefits when they face unwarranted censorship of their legitimate journalistic work.

Leading education groups, journalism organizations, and open government groups agree that there is no legitimate educational reason for censoring student journalists beyond the exceptions provided in The Student Free Press and Civics Readiness Act. Censorship silences student voices, squashes creativity, and shuts down student-led efforts to identify and solve problems in their community.

*The Student Free Press and Civics Readiness Act* balances the responsibility of public school officials to protect students from harm with the need to educate young people about the importance of the Constitution and the benefits of being civically engaged through journalism.

The Michigan Association of Broadcasters is committed to supporting the next generation of skillful, bright, inquiring student journalists. We feel that Senate Bill 848 ensures that the students learn critical judgement skills necessary to be a journalist without being unnecessarily censored.

We urge your support of Senate Bill 848!

Sincerely,

Karole L. White, CEO/President  
Michigan Association of Broadcasters

Elena Palombo, Government Relations Mngr.  
Michigan Association of Broadcasters